

**MINUTES OF**  
**FAUQUIER COUNTY TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE**  
**July 30, 2008**  
**7:00 P.M.**

*2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Conference Room – Warren Green Building*  
*10 Hotel Street*  
*Warrenton, VA 20186*

**Members Present:** Matthew Smith, Chairman, Laurence Mason, Vice-Chairman, R. Holder Trumbo, J. David Cubbage, William D. Nace, Sam Poles, and Adrienne Garreau

**Members Absent:** Peter S. Eltringham, and Jeffrey Walker

**Guests Present:** Anthony Wells, Chuck Medvitz, David Blake, John H. Spencer, and Todd Benson

**Staff Present:** Susan Eddy and Tammy Fore

**1. *Approval of June 25, 2008 Committee Meeting Minutes***

**ACTION:**

**On motion made by Ms. Garreau and seconded by Mr. Trumbo, it was moved to table the June 25, 2008 Committee meeting minutes until the next meeting on September 24, 2008. The motion carried unanimously.**

Ms. Garreau requested that a comment made by Mr. Carr in reference to the Prince William portion of Rt. 215 and its funding be added to the minutes.

**2. *Consider a request for a three-way stop sign at the junction of Halfway Road (Route 626) and Landmark Road (Route 679) and reducing the speed limit of Halfway Road (Scott District) – Dr. Anthony Wells and Dr. Carol Evans.***

Dr. Anthony Wells spoke on the current status of Halfway Road (Route 626), specifically at the intersections of Landmark Road (Route 679), Rock Hill Mill Road, and around the vicinity of Piedmont Vineyard. He noted that the traffic density has increased heavily and the road has become more dangerous since he originally spoke with the Transportation Committee on May 25, 2005.

He noted that he would like to see the speed limit reduced to 25 mph through Skinker Town and three-way stop signs placed at the junctions of Landmark Road (Route 679) and Halfway Road (Route 626) due to excessive speeding.

He then went on to state that he was surprised by the past report, which stated that there was not sufficient data showing a high volume of traffic accidents. Dr. Wells stated he had evidence of many more accidents in this location.

Mr. Cabbage then mentioned that the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) retrieves their data from the Highway Traffic Records Inventory System (HTRIS). This system shows all traffic accidents that are reported from state and local agencies.

Mr. Cabbage also added that VDOT has to meet certain criteria when addressing matters. They would have to take a technical look at the existing condition. Everything must be balanced and there must be an even flow of traffic. Crash history is only one element of the process.

Mr. Cabbage proceeded by giving the data that he pulled. He noted that per the HTRIS system there were no accidents in 2004. In 2005 there was one accident involving a vehicle running off the road. In 2006 there was one accident involving a vehicle failing to maintain control. In 2007 there were three accidents reported, one being a DUI, one motorcycle accident, and one driver intent. All of the accidents reported were single vehicle accidents.

Mr. Cabbage stated that he will have a speed study conducted. The speed study takes about 60 days. When the data is received, he will report to the Committee and necessary measures will be taken.

Various members agreed that it will be good to get data on this particular road due to its "Y" intersections, sharp curves, and reported excessive speeding.

### **3. *Statewide Rail Plan***

Mrs. Eddy informed the Committee that she just recently received information regarding the updates to the Rail Plan. She then informed the Committee that the deadline to submit comments is August 25, 2008. Therefore, they had to discuss the matter tonight so that recommendations can be submitted to the Board of Supervisors prior to the August 14, 2008 meeting.

Mrs. Eddy referred members and guests to the excerpts that were included in this month's packet. The excerpts included projects directly relating to Fauquier County such as the nearby Virginia Railway Express (VRE) expansion, the Trans Dominion Express, and the Amtrak expansion plan in the southern end of the County.

Mr. Smith questioned if the updates will directly affect the rails themselves by adding tracks or additional lines.

Mrs. Eddy informed Mr. Smith that the updated rail plan does not give those kinds of details.

Mrs. Eddy mentioned that Norfolk Southern and other companies have multiple projects for which they will be receiving funding. One example is the sidings in Delaplane.

Mr. Poles questioned if the updated plan includes a rail plan for the higher traffic volume in the Culpeper area.

Mrs. Eddy informed Mr. Poles that page 54 of the updated rail plan notes that they will primarily expand single lane tracks to double lanes, add new sidings, and expand existing sidings.

Mr. Trumbo added that the tracks will be doubling in size.

Mrs. Eddy informed the Committee that Fauquier County is a pivotal point for freight rail.

Ms. Garreau then introduced Mr. Todd Benson with the Piedmont Environmental Council (PEC), as he has been following the status of the updated rail plan and attended a number of meetings pertaining to such.

Mr. Benson mentioned that he would like three main items included in the comments. The first item is to recommend that they include the environmental and historic resources impacts and protection. The second is that more public hearings are needed. The third is that the plan lacks details.

Mr. Trumbo agreed with Mr. Benson and added that historical structures need to be protected throughout the entire county. He added that he believes Norfolk Southern has started maps showing all the historical structures. He would like the historical planner to be involved in any future meetings and discussions to assist with providing a list of all the historical structures located throughout the county.

Mr. Benson then mentioned that the State has given Norfolk Southern \$40 million to improve the rail line from Manassas to Front Royal.

Mr. Nace questioned if there were any Federal funds given.

Mr. Benson answered that there are currently no Federal funds.

Ms. Garreau asked why the timeline is so small.

Mr. Benson stated that the current plan is only the first. The financial action plan will be coming in September. This particular plan will prioritize all of the proposed updates.

Mr. Benson then informed the Committee that Federal law changed and now States and Counties cannot regulate railroads. He added that currently there are no Federal laws to regulate railroads either.

Mr. Benson stated that he believed these types of discussions should have occurred prior to the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (VDRPT) giving railroad companies millions of dollars.

Ms. Garreau questioned if the funds were already being used.

Mr. Benson stated that they probably are because there has already been boundary line adjustments submitted for the Marshall and Front Royal areas.

Mr. Benson mentioned that he believes VDRPT is trying to take trucks off the road and to do so they must start in Mississippi and New Orleans and go all the way up to New York.

He also mentioned that when railroad companies travel through Manassas it takes an extra two hours, so there are discussions of adding a rail line straight from Linden to Culpeper.

Mr. Benson concluded by stating that with this updated plan numerous acres of battlefield, national heritage, scenic rivers, and historical structures will be affected.

Mr. Nace questioned who oversees the plan.

Mr. Cubbage informed Mr. Nace and the Committee that the Secretary of Transportation oversees the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation in addition to the Virginia Department of Transportation, but the two are separate agencies.

Mrs. Eddy then recommended that the Committee visit the website: <http://www.drpt.virginia.gov>.

Mr. Nace inquired about the purpose of having a rail plan if there are no regulations for railroad companies.

Mr. Benson answered by saying that the State has \$25 million for Committee funding that can be dispersed to the railroads. He also added that they must disperse by following certain Federal guidelines in order to receive Federal funding. If Federal funds are given, then there are additional requirements.

Mr. Nace question if the updated plan included the expansion in Bealeton.

Mrs. Eddy informed him that, indeed, the expansion in Bealeton is included on page 76 of the plan.

Mr. Smith asked if a lot of people have spoken out against the new rail lines from Culpeper to Front Royal.

Mrs. Eddy informed Mr. Smith and the Committee that the “Culpeper Cutoff” is included in this plan; however it has been included in other studies.

Mr. Benson informed the Committee that the State has already begun the engineering process and it will be further discussed at a State meeting in September.

Mr. Smith asked Mr. Benson to inform him and the Committee of the exact date and time of that meeting.

Mrs. Eddy questioned Mr. Cabbage as to whether or not the rail plan has to go to the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB).

Mr. Cabbage replied that absolutely the plan will be reviewed by the CTB.

Mr. John Spencer informed the Committee that Norfolk Southern’s long range plan is to have double tracks on the southern main line all the way to Charlottesville. They would have done it earlier, but there was downsizing. They are going to be implementing these changes now because of the increase of roadway traffic and the need for freight. There is also going to be realignments made during the process.

Mrs. Eddy then introduced a draft resolution and addendum to the Committee.

The Committee members then discussed the details of the resolution and made recommendations.

Mrs. Eddy will revise the resolution and submit it to the Board of Supervisors on behalf of the Transportation Committee.

#### **ACTION:**

**On motion made by Mr. Poles and seconded by Mr. Trumbo, it was moved to submit a resolution for comments to be made to VDRPT to the Board of Supervisors prior to the August 14, 2008 meeting. The motion carried unanimously.**

#### **4. *Citizens’ Time***

Mr. David Blake spoke on the topic of Route 215. He questioned why every document has "DRAFT" on it and why every consulting party involved has objected to the plans. He also questioned why the report does not identify historic resources and preservations as he feels they need to be considered. He noted that if the current plan occurs then the nearby battlefield will be destroyed.

Mr. Trumbo informed Mr. Blake that Route 215 is a major priority and every option will be fully considered. He added that the final decision will improve Route 215 and it will be much safer.

Ms. Garreau requested that Kim Abe of the Community Development staff attend all Transportation Committee meeting when Route 215 is discussed.

Mr. Blake then informed the Committee of a Community and Countryside Workshop on September 12, 2008 and September 13, 2008 at the Warrenton Baptist Church.

Mr. Spencer addressed the Committee about the look and condition of Stockyard Road as well as Route 55. He noted that the surface roughness, angle, and deep ditch coming off Route 17 onto Stockyard Road is inadequate and unsafe. He added that near Route 55 the pavement is deteriorating.

Mr. Trumbo informed Mr. Spencer that paving will most likely occur in October and that it has taken so long due to the water lines being replaced and prior to the replacement, the roadway was too soft. He noted that the paving will occur from the train tracks to the rescue squad building. He will speak with Mr. Cabbage to find out the details on the other areas.

Mr. Spencer then asked the Committee to further evaluate the speeding and severe curvage of Bear Wallow Road.

Mrs. Eddy asked that he send a formal request to be added to a future agenda so that the Committee can have time to review.

## **5. *Other Items***

Mr. Cabbage informed the Committee of a detour occurring two weekends in August and one weekend in September on the southbound lane of Route 29 as they are working on the nearby bridge. He provided the Committee with a document giving an overview and a map of the detour flow. The detours will occur on Fridays at 9:00 p.m. through Mondays at 5:00 a.m. He noted that this is a Prince William County effort, but it will affect through traffic. The detour will start either on Interstate 66 or at the intersection of Route 29 and Route 15 as no automobiles will be able to go southbound at that light.

He then reminded the Committee that there will be detours and closures in 2009 when road work will be done at the Opal interchange.

Ms. Garreau commented on how much of an impact the detour will have on drivers using Route 600.

Mr. Cabbage reminded the Committee that this is a Prince William County effort. He may give advice, but it is ultimately their project.

Mr. Poles requested that four-way stop signs be placed at the intersection in the Village of Hume. He noted that Mr. Cubbage informed him that the intersection did qualify for a four-way stop sign.

**ACTION:**

**On motion made by Mr. Poles and seconded by Mr. Nace, it was moved to submit a resolution to place four-way stop signs at the intersection in the Village of Hume. The motion carried unanimously.**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:58 p.m.

The next meeting will be held on **Wednesday, September 24, 2008.**